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# Bagram News Express



*Fighting Terror, Building Peace*

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## Farewell from the command chief

**By Chief Master Sgt. Ray Clark**

455th Air Expeditionary Wing command chief

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** — First off, I would like to publically thank Lt. Gen. North and Brigadier Generals Hyatt and Holmes for the opportunity to serve as the Command Chief in the best combat wing in the CENTCOM AOR for the past thirteen and half months. For that I am truly grateful and if I could sum up the experience in a one short sentence it would be, “Wow, what a year!” I’ve been deploying in and out of this AOR since 1987 so I can think of no better way to finalize or cap off a 30-year career. As I depart the combat zone for the last time in the coming days I do so with bittersweet and mixed emotions. I am thrilled to be heading back home to family and friends who have endured much during my absence. But I am saddened by the thought that I’m leaving my deployed family and the feeling that I am leaving a job unfinished. But I can leave knowing that this wing will continue to do great things in my absence over the coming months. My thoughts and prayers will always be with as you continue to fight terror and build peace.

Many of you have probably asked yourselves, “Why are we here?” The first part of that answer is simple. We are here because the Taliban allowed al Qaeda and other Islamic extremists from around the world to use Afghanistan as their training ground for their terrorist activities. We are here because on Sept. 11, 2001 those terrorists carried out the cowardly acts on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. We are here to eradicate terrorism on its breeding grounds to ensure that they will never attack our shores again. We are here as a partner with the joint and coalition team to neutralize insurgent forces and to win today’s fight...one of the Air Force’s near-term priorities.



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse*  
Chief Master Sgt. Ray Clark, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing command chief, on a visit to a forward operating base in Afghanistan.

Although fighting terror is currently our primary short-term objective it is not our sole reason for being here. We are also here to help Afghanistan develop its national security capabilities so they can protect and defend themselves. We are here to help them establish a secure and stable government, one that will promote good governance and justice. We are here to revitalize an economy that has been decimated by three decades of war and conflict. We are here to improve their basic healthcare and to expand their education opportunities, especially for women and children. We are here to rebuild the country’s infrastructure - one road, one bridge, one hydroelectric dam, etc. at a time. We are here to train our replacements - the people of Afghanistan - so that one day Afghans will be taking care of Afghans.

To accomplish these long-term objectives we have a three-prong strategy for Afghanistan: Security, Governance and Reconstruction/Development. Security remains a fundamental prerequisite for achieving stability and development but can not be

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# Airman fuels the fight, breaks Bagram record

By Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez  
455th Air Expeditionary Wing

**BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan** — Fuel the fight - that's what Staff Sgt. Michael Baker does everyday as a fuels specialist for the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Two months in to his four-month deployment, Sergeant Baker has broken three fuels

records - most gallons pumped in one week, most gallons pumped in one month and fastest to pump 1 million gallons.

"It helps the days go by quicker if I am working hard," said the sergeant deployed from Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

Sergeant Baker pumped 610,487 gallons of fuel in October, breaking the previous monthly record by 73,737 gallons. With more than half a million gallons under his belt in one month, it

didn't take long for the Vancouver, Wash., native to break the million gallon record. On Nov. 14, he surpassed this milestone while refueling a C-130 Hercules. It took him just 58 days, three days faster than the previous record holder.

"Staff Sgt. Michael Baker is an outstanding Airman who personifies the values of Service before Self and Excellence in all we do," said Lt. Col. Gregory Vaughan, 455th E L R S commander. "His accomplishment of reaching 1 million gallons pumped in a



*A fuel meter counts the number of gallons pumped. Sergeant Baker, deployed from Minot Air Force Base, N.D., is trying to break the record for most fuel pumped in a rotation.*

record of just 58 days is indicative of his dedication and professionalism."

Sergeant Baker pumped a majority of the fuel on the close air support side of the flightline.

"I normally do the fighter jets - they call and need the gas so they can get up and go," he said. "I get job satisfaction from accomplishing something that means something to somebody else."

With three records already under his belt, Sergeant Baker is setting his sights on a fourth.

"The most pumped in a rotation is 1.6 million - I should have that next month," he said.

In addition to pumping so much fuel, Sergeant Baker has been able to reach out and help others.

"Sergeant Baker volunteers for a number of organizations here at Bagram," said Colonel Vaughan. "He has volunteered for a total of 75 hours to the USO, Red Cross, Operation Care, Craig Hospital and MWR sponsored events. He is a driven individual helping to build a free Afghanistan."

Sergeant Baker said it is all in a day's work.



*Photos by Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez*

*Staff Sgt. Michael Baker, 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels specialist, pumps fuel to a waiting aircraft at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Nov. 14, 2008. Sergeant Baker, a native of Vancouver, Wash., pumped a million gallons of fuel in 58 days, breaking the previous Bagram record by three days.*

# FAREWELL

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provided by military means alone. It requires good governance, justice and the rule of law reinforced by reconstruction and development. The end game is to establish a self-reliant Afghanistan that provides effective governance, one that is self-securing, one that is committed to representative government and one that is economically viable.

Now that you know why we're here, your next question might be, "But are we making a difference?" I would answer that question with a resounding, "Yes," because I've seen it firsthand as I travel about. Our overarching goal is to give the people of Afghanistan a better way of life, a safer place to live and opportunities for a lasting future...one that we hope will be peaceful. What we do everyday is slowly working towards helping the Afghans achieve those goals. Our mission is important. Our efforts...your efforts...are making a difference.

The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing is playing an integral and enduring part to the continued progress and ultimate success in Afghanistan and the global war on terror. Every day, Airpower is taking the fight to the insurgency with over 15,000 combat and combat support sorties flown over the past year. We have Airmen throughout the AOR and in virtually every AFSC that are performing tasks that in many cases are new to our Air Force culture. They do so with a high

level of skill, expertise and enthusiasm...I would expect nothing less because it's those attributes that define us as Airmen and why our sister services continue to ask for more Airmen in joint operations.

Additionally, our Airmen are supporting countless non-kinetic operations across Afghanistan. Airmen are performing medical and logistics mentor roles within Embedded Training Teams and Brigade Support Teams as they organize, train and equip the Afghanistan Security Forces...the National Army, the National Police and the Border Police. With our mentorship, these organizations are growing in capacity and more importantly they are gaining the support and respect of the Afghan people.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams have executed more than \$150 million on more than 150 projects as they help rebuild the infrastructure that will provide the necessary improvements to commerce, transportation and access to healthcare, education and government centers. Over the past year, they built or repaired 26 schools which allow education opportunities to over 60,000 children. Twenty clinics have been built to provide essential

healthcare to nearly 1.1 million residents. They are also producing great results as roads, bridges, micro hydro-electric generators, and irrigations canals are completed.

Just to put it all in perspective let's highlight some of the progress that has been made between rule under the Taliban and the Afghan government of today. During the Taliban's seven year reign, there were only about 1,000 schools throughout the country with roughly one million males in attendance...females were forbidden to attend. Today, there are over 9,000 schools with attendance numbers exceeding 6 million and

growing. The best news is these figures include 2.2 million females! Under the Taliban, the infant mortality rate was the highest in the world. Since 2001 our medical community has been working hard to improve healthcare and have so far reduced that rate by 25 percent. The agricultural economy was in total disarray with 60-70 percent of their irrigation canals destroyed. Today, 440 kilometers of canals have been rebuilt and now service over 240,000 acres.

The list of successes and



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progress will continue to grow. Over the next seven years, Airmen in concert with our joint and coalition partners will execute over 110 projects valued at \$1.3 billion in reconstruction and improvements. Many of these projects will employ and train Afghans as apprentices, eventually providing the country with a highly skilled labor force as we continue the daunting task of rebuilding their devastated and neglected infrastructure. So you can see that we are indeed making a difference as we work hard to win the hearts and minds of the people of Afghanistan.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM is a long-term investment and one that will require continued

sacrifice from our Airmen and our joint and coalition partners. We're building trust and hope one village, one district, one province at a time. In the end I'm confident we'll build a lasting alliance of democracy. There's no doubt about it in my mind that we will prevail. It has truly been a privilege and an honor to have had the opportunity to serve as your Command Chief. I am proud to have been a part of the world's most respected and most feared Air Force for the past 30 years. As I leave the service, I will sleep well at night knowing that the Air Force is in great hands. Be proud to be an Airman...you are America's Airman! Be proud of who are, what you do and what you bring to the fight...we couldn't do it without you. Be proud knowing that you are making a difference.

## News Briefs

### THANKSGIVING SERVICES

There will be a Thanksgiving Day Service on Nov. 27 from 1000-1100 at the Enduring Faith Chapel. The purpose of the service is to thank God for all of the blessings we have received as a nation and personally. There will also be a "Thanksgiving Fellowship" time on TNov. 27 from 1800-2200 at the Enduring Faith Chapel. The purpose of the fellowship is to spend Thanksgiving evening with friends. There will be two movies shown: "Rudy" and "Invincible."

### MARRIAGE WORKSHOP

The Chaplains Office presents a Marriage Workshop: The Sacred in Marriage. The workshop will be held Nov. 22 from 0900-1000 and Nov. 23 from 2100-2000 in Town Hall. The workshop will identify the sacred realms of marriage -- commitment, sacrifice, intimacy. For more info or to RSVP, contact Chaplain Brian Nierman at [brian.j.nierman@afghan.swa.army.mil](mailto:brian.j.nierman@afghan.swa.army.mil).

### A.C.E. MEETINGS

Airmen Committed To Excellence meets Fridays at 1700L/1230Z in front of Town Hall. Meetings are open to all Airmen in the rank of E-1 to E-4.

### ATTENTION ALL JUNIOR NCOS

The Bagram AF Route 5/6 meets Thursdays at 1800L/1330Z at Camp Cunningham's Town Hall. The meetings are open to all staff sergeant selects, staff sergeants and tech sergeants.

### AFSA MEETINGS

Air Force Sergeants Association Exeditonary Chapter 1657 is holding meetings bi-weekly on Saturdays, with alternating times. The next meeting is Nov. 8 at 0800, followed by the next meeting Nov. 22 at 1700.

### NEWCOMERS INPROCESSING

All Air Force members are required to inprocess with PERSCO. The inprocessing will start your combat pay entitlements. If you have been in the AOR for at least 30 days and you are not receiving combat pay, please stop by Finance located in the tower on Camp Cunningham. If you know for a fact that you did not

inprocess with PERSCO, then please visit PERSCO located in the Pax terminal. Please call PERSCO 431-2070 with any questions.

### IMMUNIZATIONS

Are your immunizations up to date? Active duty members are required to stay current on all immunizations during their deployment. Most frequently due vaccines are Hepatitis B, Influenza, Anthrax, Smallpox and Typhoid. Report to your nearest medical treatment facility. Check your status and get vaccinated! For qustions, contact TF Med Public Health.

### COMBAT PUSH

Combat Push times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L/0430Z to 1000L/0530Z. Services, Comm and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel must complete your Post Deployment Health Questionnaire on-line and pick up your medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat Push. For more information call 431-4409.